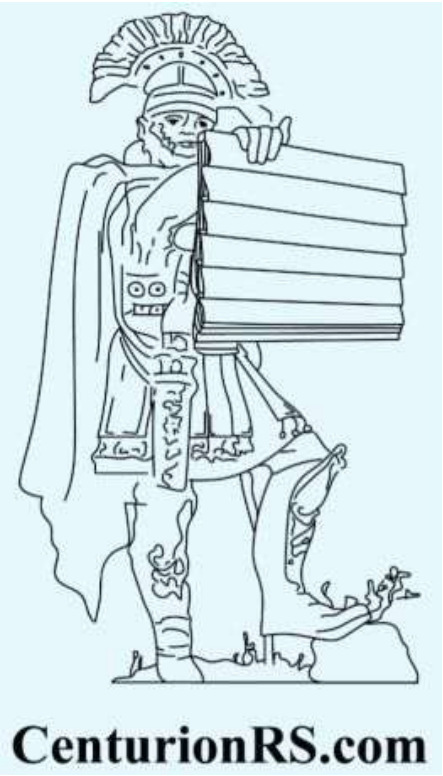

Relaxed Roman Shade Instructions

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Supplies Needed –

Single Swoop 2-cord Widget Kit, or
Double Swoop 3-cord Widget Kit, or
Triple Swoop 4-cord Widget kit (Sample shade in video series uses 2-cord)

Face Fabric, Lining Fabric, Wood Mount Board (Common Stock Pine), Round Steel Weight, White tubing or extra lining fabric, Optional: ½" Clear Plastic Tubing

Tools Needed to Fabricate: Scissors, Long Ruler, Pencil, Iron, Needle/Thread, White Glue, White Duct Tape, Hand-held or pneumatic Stapler & Staples, Phillips Head Screwdriver, Awl, Metal Blade Hand Saw (or power tool), Wood Hand Saw (or power tool)

Test your fabric first to know if it is suitable for iron heat or steam setting.

- ✓ Consider print for pattern match.
- ✓ If there is more than one shade per room, match the pattern on all shades as best as possible.

These 9 steps correspond to the YouTube series on our Centurion Roman Shade Channel (https://www.youtube.com/@CenturionRS/playlists) for "Make Your Own Relaxed Roman Shade" published May, 2026. Each daily video matches each step in the instructions printed here. If you need a visual for a particular step, please refer to the YouTube video for that step. It is recommended that you watch the entire series before making your shade so that you are familiar with the steps. You will need to adjust the dimensions if you are making a shade for a specific size and the number of swoops you want.

Centurion Playlists

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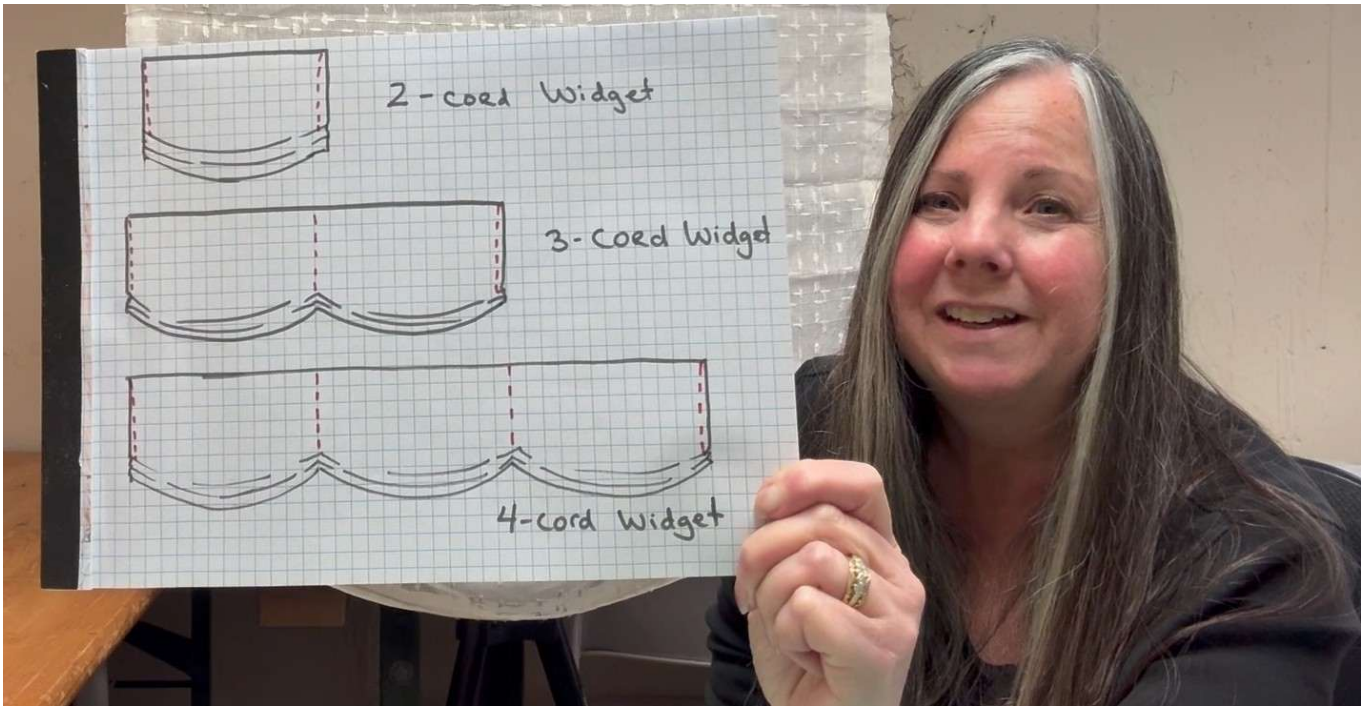
Step 1 – How Many Lift Cords Does My Shade Require?

- Widget kits can be ordered in 2–, 3–, or 4–cord kits.
- A single swoop needs a 2-cord Widget Kit. If you want 2 swoops require a 3-cord Widget Kit, and 3 swoops require a 4-cord Widget Kit.
- You should draw your shade to scale to see how many swoops your shade will need. It is not recommended to do a single swoop wider than 45” as the wider the swoop will either be too deep or too skinny looking. Use gridded paper to draw your window and shade to scale to determine the best proportions.



- It is <u>not recommended</u> to ever use ribs or add structure to a shade that is supposed to be relaxed.
- Fabric weight is generally irrelevant, but the rigidity of the fabric and the look (straight or relaxed) of the shade design both have a bearing on how the shade will look when it is functioning and how much care is needed to dress the folds after raising the shade.

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Step 2 – Cutting The Face Fabric and Lining Fabric, Fabricating Flat Trim, Pinning All Layers Together

- **Start by cutting the lining fabric first as follows** –
  - Determine the amount of fabric needed in the “permanent folds”. The permanent folds start at the bottom of the finished length.
  - Drape a weight chain the width of your shade with the desired swoop drop. Record the length of the weight chain. Add 21-1/2” (or your specific measurement) to the FL for 3 permanent folds and 2” to wrap the board*. Dimensions in the video are different due to the proportions used and fabric available.*
  - The body of the shade is flat like a flat Roman shade and the fabric will flair in a trapezoid shape below the finished length.
  - The width is the finished width + 6” (3” each side hems) plus the flair at the bottom as determined by the bead chain. *Or allow only 1” for seam allowances if you are going to “pillowcase” this shade.*
- **Consider print and pattern placement before cutting the Face Fabric**
- Place the cut lining fabric on the wrong side of the fabric.
- Cut the face fabric by adding 6” to the top and 4” to the bottom and 3” to each side for hems. *Or only 1’2” on 3 sides and 6” for the top, if “pillow-casing” the shade. Interlining is coupled with the face fabric at this step, if using.*

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- **Optional Flat Trim Fabrication**
- Fabricate flat trim strips – Cut 2” strip of contrast or same fabric on the bias. Fold the strip in half so that it finishes at 1” wide with a fold on one side.

- Lay out 3 pieces along the cut lining and face fabric. Line up, mark and stitch each mitered corner so you get the compound miter corners lining up to your cut pieces.
- Flip the trim and align the raw edges, insert the trim so that the fold edge is to the interior of the shade and sandwiched between the face fabric and lining. Pin through all layers on the 3 sides (bottom hem + 2 sides)
- Mark ½” in on each corner so that the trim can pivot at that point.

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Step 3 –Stitching 3 sides, Turning Right-side Out, and Pressing

- At the machine, stitch all three sides as pinned. Be sure to pivot at the pencil dots as marked.
- Turn right-side out and press all sides and body making sure there are no creases or puckers in the fabric. Make sure that the flat trim is not puckered or caught awkwardly in a seam. The trim should lay flat around the border of the shade, and the corners are flat with the mitered seams.

Optional fabrication if not pillow-cased.

- Press the side hems in 3” each side following the edge including the trapezoid hemline. And then turn and press again so that there is 1-1/2” side hems finished.
- Press up 4” from bottom for a double 2” bottom hem
- Whip stitch by hand (or use a glue tack for blackout fabrics) to stitch the side hems. Only stitch the length of the fabric lining, on each side.

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Step 4 – Measure & Mark the Tack Points and Stitch the Tack Points & Bottom Brass Ring

- Re-check and measure finished length. Press top face fabric down over lining at the top of the shade (6” for wrapping the board)
- Calculate the amount of vertical spacing for tack points on the length.
    - Subtract the trapezoid section
    - Subtract 1 1/2” for wood and Widget bulk
    - Divide by a number so that the spaces are less than 8” between tack points
    - Use a pencil to put a dot where each tack point will be.
- Cut the length of ladder tape needed for each lift, you can leave it longer and cut again in the next step.

- Starting at the bottom (top of trapezoid), stitch a tack including a brass ring and the bottom of the ladder tape. Using double thread knotted and a needle, catch all the layers in the first tack and go around a few more times and knot off to secure the tack. Adjust the ladder tape so that every tack is sewn through a solid section of the ladder.
- Moving up vertically on the lift cord, hand tack the ladder tape up from the last tack. Continue tacking moving up vertically toward the top of the shade.
- Repeat the previous step for each vertical lift cord.
- Optional - Place a small dot of glue on each hand tack. Allow it to dry completely. For a blackout shade, you may also want to use a “quick dry correction fluid” as this will cover any pin holes or light leaks caused by the stitch.

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Step 5 – Stitch Up the Permanent Folds at Bottom Hem

- Mark in 5” intervals up the slanted side hem on the trapezoid.
- Accordion fold the side hem of the trapezoid so that the intervals mark with a pencil or pin are visible. Use a needle and thread to catch and stitch all the layers together in 1 tack. Go around a few times with needle and thread to secure these folds in this position. Be sure to include the brass ring with a few passes of the thread.

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Step 6 – Cutting and Attaching the weight bar

- Cut the weight bar to the finished width – 1” narrower that the finished width of the shade. We recommend a steel threaded or round rod, although a flat could work as well. In any case, the weight bar must be rigid across the width of the shade (no flex!) in order to raise the cords evenly and together.

- Insert the weight bar into a fabric tube either the color of the lining or the face fabric (whichever looks best). Stitch ends closed.
- Slide the hem grip on the weight bar from one end so that it floats in the middle. It will be loose and free-hanging upside down. **Do not pry open the hem grip as it will create stress cracks in the plastic that can break over time.**
- Stitch the weight bar to the brass rings tack point maintaining the finished width at the bottom of the hem.

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Step 7 - Attach Shade to Wood Mounting Board and installing Screw Eyes

- Press top edge and place pins on the front side for placement.
- Staple a small square of fabric to the end of the board.
- Align the shade to the board from the top, front edge and staple in a few places to secure.
- Unfold the board toward yourself and wrap the remainder of the fabric covering the board and tuck 1” under and staple on the narrow inside edge. Trim away any bulk from side hems to eliminate bulk.

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Installing The Screw Eyes

- On the underside of the wood mount board, insert the screw eyes in the middle of the underside of the mount board, in line with each ladder tape row.
- Use and Awl to pierce the fabric and wood, insert the screw eye by hand and use a flat head screw driver (or similar tool) as a lever and turn until secure and perpendicular position.
- Repeat for each screw eye.

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Step 8 - Installing The Widget & Threading the Ladder Tape & Knot Off At Bottom Rings

- Remove the rubber bands and uncoil the cords from around the outside of the Widget.
- Mount the Widget with 2 screws going into the designated, most outboard holes. (***CAUTION****: Only tighten mounting screws until Widget is gently attached to the mounting board…over-tightening will prevent the cords from reeling/unreeling. You should be able to slightly rock the Widget back and forth on the mounting board.*)
- The Widget should be placed closest to center as possible.
- The Widget should be placed so that the cords go out in both directions. The stickers should be visible.

- Thread the cords through each screw eye on the mounting board.
- Use the plastic needle to individually thread each ladder tape. Go in and out in a serpentine manner, going over and under the solid ladder sections.
- Start by counting 3 solid sections of ladder above the closest tack point to the top of the shade. Continue threading the cord down the length of each ladder tape. Alternate the cord so that it "weaves in-and-out" of the ladder tape so that it is integrated. Go through the brass ring at the bottom and cut off excess leaving about 8".
- **Tie off each cord at the brass ring using a double Hitch knot. Refer to tutorials if you need a visual diagram of this knot. We have a diagram in our reference FAQ's and Blog posts.**
- Tuck in the excess 8" into the weight bar tubing or the bottom hem between the whip stitches of the bottom hem.

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Step 9 – Pulling the Pin – Widget Wiggle, Steam Folds & Test Shade

- Once all the cords are threaded and knotted at the bottom (double check this step is complete), you can remove the pin under the sticker which will release the tension device. Save the pin…it must be re-inserted to take the tension off the Widget for any adjustments. Your shade will now retract with your assistance to make sure the folds are not interfering.

IMPORTANT: The pin must ALWAYS be re-inserted before untying any cords at the hem!

- With your shade laying in front of you, facing the right side up, use your hands to adjust and hand press the folds. Your shade may benefit from some steam to help set the folds for function.
- Now you can test the shade by raising and lowering. You can mount or clamp the shade to a stand to test. Be careful when mounting to test or installing that none of the cords are pinched during this process. Improper installation of the shade may affect your shade raising and lowering properly, especially if one or more cords are inadvertently pinched.
- **Optional Spacers**– Clear ½" PVC tubing for use as spacers where needed to lift folds so lower folds remain visible. It is best to determine if tubing spacers are going to be used on your shade prior to stitching tack points so that it can be threaded on as you stitch the tacks. But you can make one slit in the tubing and insert the ladder tape/cord in the center of the tubing. Use clear tape and/or glue to seal the slit on the tubing. You can experiment with the size of your spacers with this process.

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A video of the Widget assembly process can be found at https://www.youtube.com/@CenturionRS/playlists (or scan QR code to view).

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